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ABSTRACT
This issue of CURRENTS focuses on the selection and evaluation/retention of college faculty as 2 means of improving college teaching. The review of selected literature on hiring and evaluation practices includes summaries of successful and proposed criteria for measuring faculty performance and barriers to their use. Twenty-two sources document the review. (JS)

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IMPROVING COLLEGE TEACHING THROUGH FACULTY SELECTION AND EVALUATION: A REVIEW

> . . . positively more needs to be said, not only on how we can create good teaching, but more importantly on how to close the "credibility gap" between academia's professed valuation of teaching, and its performance.[1]

The improvement of college teaching has had a few dedicated disciples over the years. In 1949, T. C. Blegan wishfully envisioned 1984 as the time when (1) the importance of college teaching would be recognized by all; (2) the skill of newly trained college teachers in the classroom would amaze the community; (3) new college teachers would be deeply interested in students and in the learning process; and (4) graduate faculties would regard the training of college teachers as a major objective rather than as a by-product.[2] The fact that these goals are still far from realization is reflected in studies by Paul Dressel and Lewis Mayhew. In 1967, after visiting 80 classes in 19 schools, they concluded that classes and courses in general education consisted of routine lecture presentations of materials already available in textbooks, and that students did not appear to be particularly interested in what was being said.[3] Such observations lend support to current student complaints.

Although the cause of improving the quality of teaching in higher education has always had some support, concentrated attention and action in this area rises and falls like waves, peaking every few years. Most recently, the student protest movement has provided renewed emphasis and has made "quality teaching" a high priority item in college and university affairs.

> Historically, every generation of students has been hungry for good teachers, but the current generation has been the first in this country to mount an organized attack on what they charge has been the Establishment's lack of concern for the poor quality of college instruction.[4]

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The improvement of instruction can and probably should be approached from several angles, for the quality of teaching depends on a number of factors—the type of students who are selected for graduate training, the kind of training provided in graduate schools, the types of in-service training provided by the employing institution, the kinds of criteria used when selecting faculty for new positions, and the criteria used when determining the retention and promotion of faculty members. The Clearinghouse on Higher Education is preparing a compendium of studies on the preparation of college teachers to be available in July. It will include descriptions of ongoing training programs and proposals for new graduate degrees. This issue of *Currents* will focus on two other methods of improving college teaching: faculty selection and faculty retention.

Selection

Schueler[5] is representative of the view that successful recruitment and appointment procedures are the core of institutional programs for improving instruction. The hiring of a given faculty member influences the nature of the instructional staff at that institution for a significant period.

In this age of specialization and research, there is some feeling that the task of assembling a teaching staff devoted to the art of teaching may be impossible. McGrath[6] describes the experience of a new college, Eisenhower College in Seneca Falls, New York, in recruiting its faculty. Staff members were chosen on the basis of their commitment to three factors which the founders considered indispensible: (1) a commitment to teaching, (2) a commitment to a broad interdisciplinary curriculum, and (3) a commitment to the idea that it is best to offer a few basic subjects well taught in order to provide a limited but adequate specialization in the common liberal arts disciplines. The college opened its doors for 300 freshmen in the fall of 1968. McGrath views Eisenhower College's successful recruitment as proof that such teachers can be found.

Kenneth Clark[7] calls for the development of a system which would facilitate the selection of good teachers. He compares teacher selection to the selection of administrative personnel, and points out that it has been shown it is possible to develop quite complete dossiers in which a major component is the administrative or organizational skills of an individual. As a result of the availability of such information, administrators have been placed in various jobs. The Carnegie Corporation and the American Council on Education have served as informal clearinghouses for selecting college presidents.

Teaching, Clark believes, should be no more difficult (and is probably easier) to assess than the qualities of leadership desired in deans, vice presidents and presidents. He calls for the development of a formal clearinghouse, to function on a national level, for information on teachers. Along with the creation of a clearinghouse to gather and disseminate information about teaching capability, Clark urges the development of a reliable measuring device to assess teaching competence, which would result in a numerical system as meaningful as standardized test scores. This number would then be added to all the other evidence in an individual faculty member's dossier. He suggests that perhaps an agency or an interinstitutional arrangement might be established for such devices to be developed, standardized scores prepared, and the information distributed.

Evaluation

Faculty evaluation has often been suggested as a means to improve college teaching. But, many criticisms have been leveled at current practices.

The first area of criticism centers around criteria used for evaluation. Is the nature of the reward system within higher education such that one must publish or perish? It does not seem possible when one realizes that 85 to 90% of all college teaching is done by teachers who neither do research nor publish.[8] But certain factors support this conclusion. (1) The research-scholar rather than the teacher-scholar receives the status in graduate schools. The comment of a current student exemplifies this emphasis:

> I came to graduate school wanting to be a liberal arts teacher. I now want to do research. I consider this is a moral decline on my part but I have learned that research is where the money, the prestige and the mobility are.[9]

(2) New faculty members at smaller schools regard their positions as temporary, and they emphasize research in order to end what they consider professional exile.[10] (3) The major universities at which the publish or perish doctrine does apply have an enormous influence over the character of all higher education institutions, so that faculties at the 1500 schools where the policy is not actually applicable still act as though it were a reality.[11] Thus, faculty members aspiring to eminence push to publish regardless of institutional affiliation.

Further evidence that a publish or perish standard does exist in higher education is provided by Astin and Lee.[12] In 1966, they found that deans claimed to place classroom teaching high in importance when evaluating their faculty. Yet the actual performance of the teacher was judged by his scholarly research and publications which, in a given case, may or may not have been related to his classroom behavior. They recommend that criteria more directly relevant to effective classroom performance be applied in evaluation procedures.

Publishing should not, however, be viewed as a liability to good teaching as the "research versus teaching" issue might indicate. Many studies attest to the correlation between those who have published and those rated as good teachers by their students.[13] The real complaint lies with the fate of those excellent teachers who don't do research or publish and, therefore, are not retained by their institutions on the basis of their teaching merit. There is consensus that good teaching should be recognized. The Project to Improve College Teaching,[14] sponsored by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges, found that 92% of 1500 faculty members at six diverse institutions felt that teaching effectiveness should be "quite or very important" in determining promotions.

Criteria and barriers

Two journal articles provide examples of the kind of criteria which might be used. Royall Brandis[15] suggests that a teacher should receive credit for: publication of a textbook; publication of teaching aids; pedagogical innovations and experiments; publications on teaching or general educational questions; receipt of grants for research in teaching; participation in professional association programs directed at improving teaching; and activities directed at enlightening the public with respect to the profession.

Charles Gray[16] lists 12 criteria to be included in a model for evaluating teacher performance. He suggests that the instructor: (1) make explicit the objectives of his course; (2) provide suggestions on how students can practice skills required for success in the course; (3) provide students with opportunities for feedback regarding their performance by means of various types of critiques; (4) provide organized expository presentations reflecting scholarship in the field and variable reference approaches; (5) encourage students to analyze the major assumptions of the course; (6) pace the workload; (7) use up-to-date course materials; (8) use evaluative instruments that are logically related to the course objectives; (9) provide a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiencies; (10) be available for regular student conferences; (11) suggest activities to pursue a continued interest beyond course requirements; and (12) have his own performance rated by actual student or colleague observers.

There are barriers, however, to the systematic evaluation of teaching behavior. Typically, a faculty-administrator is responsible for knowing about the quality of his staff's teaching, yet there are social and attitudinal obstacles to his finding out this information. These include: good teachers are born not made; teaching is a creative activity which eludes measurement; teaching is an art not a science; teaching is something you do, not something you talk about; and a teacher is supposed to have absolute autonomy in his classroom.

These attitudes have led to the state of affairs described by a number of authors. C. E. Rothwell[17] points out that a comparison of surveys conducted by John Gustad in 1961 and the American Council on Education in 1966 shows almost no progress and some regression in the practice of systematic evaluation as a matter of good administrative policies. The department head or dean almost invariably gathered information about teaching ability via the "grapevine." The Newsletter *Project to Improve Teaching* reports both that most campuses have not yet found satisfactory means of evaluating teaching, and that methods vary tremendously with respect to their degree of formality. Cohen and Brawer[18] comment that "the best that can be said for current

methods of evaluating faculty in institutions of higher education is that they are ineffectual and little regarded."

The problem, as Cohen and Brawer point out, is that research on teachers and practices of faculty evaluation "flow in separate beds" even though both are presumably flowing in the direction of better teaching. Whether there are research findings which could be put to use by the administrator interested in systematizing his evaluation procedures has been questioned. Gustad[19] is among those who point out that we are in the position where we cannot reliably identify those faculty members who are at various points on the scale of teaching excellence. Cohen and Brawer sum up the situation:

> A variety of measurement devices, samples, and statistical techniques have been used to study teachers. So-called subjective ratings compete with objective scales for the affection of investigators. Hundreds of investigations conducted over a span of many years in every type of educational institution have failed to suggest a way of looking at teachers and teaching situations that is standardized, replicable, representative of the wishes of the profession, or acceptable to more than one group. A systematic attack on the issue is certainly lacking. However, lack of consensus on approaches to the problem—in fact, a variety of interpretations of the problem itself—has not dissuaded researchers from continuing efforts to appraise teachers.[20]

Since neither faculty evaluation nor research has come very far, are any new directions hopeful? Hildebrand and Wilson's[21] research project aimed to develop a reliable instrument. Their (Hildebrand and Wilson) principal goal was to provide a basis for evaluating teaching which could be incorporated into advancement procedures. Their report details the construction and development of three forms of varying length which could be used in evaluation, with specific recommendations for implementation at the University of California, Davis. Although both student and faculty characterizations of effective teaching were analyzed, the final recommended instrument relies heavily on the students' characterization. Five scales were established by factor analysis of items describing the teaching of the best teachers, and were found consistent with concepts in the literature:

1. Analytic/Synthetic Approach—scholarship, with emphasis on breadth, analytic ability, and conceptual understanding.
2. Organization/Clarity—skill at presentation, but is subject-related, not student-related, and not merely rhetorical skill.
3. Instructor-Group Interaction—rapport with the class as a whole, sensitivity to class response, and skill at securing active class participation.
4. Instructor-Individual Student Interaction—mutual respect and rapport between the instructor and the individual student.
5. Dynamism/Enthusiasm—the flare and infectious enthusiasm that comes with confidence, excitement for the subject, and pleasure in teaching.

Wilbert McKeachie[22] sees hope in Richard Mann's studies. Mann is conducting research toward understanding the development, over a term, of the student-teacher relationship. Cohen and Brawer provide a model which distinguishes between evaluating the teacher and evaluating teaching. They view the instructor as only one force in the total learning environment, which implies that the effects of the total instructional process must be included in a research design.

These are only three areas indicative of future directions. Hopefully, there will be more research as the cause of teaching gains status in the entire academic community. Superior teaching will become commonplace only when it is recognized, emphasized, respected, and rewarded.

Lora H. Robinson

FOOTNOTES

[1]C.E. Rothwell, *The Importance of Teaching: A Memo to the New College Teacher*. New Haven, Connecticut: The Hazen Foundation, 1968. ED 036 268. MF-$0.50, HC-$4.25.

[2]T. C. Blegen and R. M. Cooper, eds., *Preparation of College Teachers*. Washington: American Council on Education, 1950.

[3]Lewis B. Mayhew, *Innovation in Collegiate Instruction: Strategies for Change*. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, December 1967. ED 022 415. MF-$0.25, HC-$2.20.

[4]Ann M. Heiss, *The Preparation of College and University Teachers*. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1969. HE 001 589. RIE Sep 70. MF-$0.25, HC-$1.90.

[5]Herbert Schueler, "Recruitment and Appointment of Faculty," *Improvement of Instruction in Higher Education*. Washington: The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Study Series No. 6, 1962.

[6]Earl J. McGrath, "What Does the Small College Have to Sell?" Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, August 1968. ED 026 014. MF-$0.25, HC-$0.90.

[7]Kenneth E. Clark, "Will Improved Skill in Teaching Be Recognized?" Mimeographed, 1970. HE 001 457. RIE Sep 70. MF-$0.25, HC-$0.60.

[8]Ann M. Heiss, *The Utilization of the College and University Teacher*. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, August 1968. ED 026 002. MF-$0.25, HC-$2.10.

[9]Heiss, *The Preparation of College and University Teachers. op. cit.*

[10]Mark Beach, "Promoting Good Teaching in the Microversity." *Journal of Higher Education* 37, June 1966. pp. 301-06.

[11]Mayhew, *op. cit.*

[12]Alexander W. Astin and Calvin B. T. Lee. "Current Practices in the Evaluation and Training of College Teachers." *Educational Record* 47, Summer 1966. pp. 361-75.

[13]Jack B. Bresler, "Teaching Effectiveness and Government Awards." *Science* 160, April 12, 1968. pp. 164-67. ED 029 554; Heiss, *The Utilization of the College and University Teacher,*

op. cit.; O. Milton and E. J. Shoben, *Learning and the Professors*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968; William M. Stallings and Sushila Singhal, "Some Observations on the Relationships between Research Productivity and Student Evaluations of Courses and Teaching." Mimeographed, 1969. ED 027 838. MF-$0.25, HC-$0.60.

[14]*Project to Improve College Teaching*. Newsletter sponsored by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges, May 1970.

[15]Royall Brandis, "The Rehabilitation of University Undergraduate Teaching." *Educational Record* 45, Winter 1964. pp. 56-63.

[16]Charles E. Gray, "The Teaching Model and Evaluation of Teaching Performance." *Journal of Higher Education* 40, November 1969. pp. 636-42.

[17]Rothwell, *op. cit.*

[18]Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, "Measuring Faculty Performance." Washington: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1969. ED 031 222. MF-$0.50, HC-$4.60.

[19]John W. Gustad, "Faculty, Students, and Administrators: Their Relationship to Quality." *Quality in Higher Education*. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, July 1965.

[20]Cohen and Brawer, *op. cit.*

[21]Milton Hildebrand and Robert C. Wilson, *Effective University Teaching and its Evaluation*. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1970. HE 001 603. RIE Oct 70. MF-$0.25, HC-$2.15.

[22]Wilbert J. McKeachie, "Significant Student and Faculty Characteristics Relevant to Personalizing Instruction." *The Individual and the System*, ed. by W. John Minter. Boulder, Colorado: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1967.

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